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CHARLES BAKER'S,

TREATISE

for the Preventing of Smeet in Whe



CHARLES BAKER's

Treatise

FOR THE

PREVENTING OF THE SMUT

IN

WHEAT.



Bristol :

PRINTED, BY JOHN ROSE, FOR THE AUTHOR; and fold by none without the Author's Name written, in his own Hand-Writing, to the Authority given in the ensuing page. —— October 26, 1797.

PRICE ONE GUINEA.

CHARLES WALLEY

George R

GEORGE the Third, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, and so forth, to all to whom these presents shall come. Greeting: WHEREAS Charles Baker, of the City of Bristol, Seedsman, hath, by his petition, humbly represented unto Us, That he hath, after much study, and a very great expence, found out and discovered the Cause, and a Sure Method to Prevent, the Smut in Wheat, on which he proposes to publish a Tract, entitled,-" Charles Baker's Treatise for the Preventing of the Smut in Wheat," and which he conceives will be of confiderable utility to the Public. The Petitioner, therefore, humbly prays Us to authorize and grant him Our Royal License and Authority for the fole printing, publishing, and vending the faid work, "entitled, Charles Baker's Treatise for the Preventing of the Smut in Wheat;" WE are graciously pleased to condescend to the Petitioner's request; And We do, therefore, by these presents, as far as may be agreeable to the Statute in that case made and provided. grant unto him, the faid Charles Baker, his Heirs, Executors, and Affigns, Our Royal License and Authority for the fole printing, publishing, and vending the faid work; ftrictly forbidding all Our Subjects, within Our Kingdoms and Dominions, to reprint or abridge the same, either in the like, or in any size or manner whatsoever, or to import, buy, vend, utter, or distribute, any copies thereof reprinted beyond the Seas, without the consent or approbation of the said Charles Baker, his Heirs, Executors, Administrators, or Assigns, under their hands and seals, first had and obtained, as they will answer the contrary at their peril. Whereof the Commissioners and other Officers of Our Customs, the Master, Warden, and Company of Stationers, are to take Notice, that due obedience may be rendered to Our Pleasure herein declared. Given at Our Court at Saint James's, the Twenty-Ninth Day of September, 1797, in the Thirty-Seventh Year of Our Reign.

By His Majesty's Command,

PORTLAND,

I hereby authorize and empower the Purchaser hereof,
and him or her only, to work according to the
Method herein prescribed, for the Prevention of
the Smut in Wheat; and to no other but the
said Purchaser, or to the person or persons
acting for the direct use and purpose of, and
on Wheat to be sown only on the lands occupied
and farmed by, the said Purchaser.

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CHARLES BAKER'S

TREATISE

FOR THE

Preventing of the Smut in Wheat.

THINK it unnecessary to trouble the Reader with a long introduction to a treatife, wherein my principal view is to render this system clear and intelligible to the understanding of every person interested therein, by avoiding ambiguous words and phrases, and to point out every thing in fo clear and plain a manner, that the most illiterate may not be at a loss to comprehend the method here laid down, which I have endeavoured to pen in the clearest and most simple ftyle the fubject will admit of, being convinced that it will be more agreeable and fatisfactory to many of the Subscribers to this valuable work, than if wrote in a superior style of elegance; on whose account I have adhered, as much as possible, to the common mode of expression, whereby

whereby this fystem cannot fail of being properly understood and applied by all.

Various have been the conjectures and opinions entertained by those concerned in Wheatgrowing, respecting the cause of Smut, some attributing it to one thing, and fome to another, without ever being able to discover its origin, confequently could never apply a remedy which would effectually eradicate this baneful property, fo destructive and injurious, not only to the quality of Wheat, but causes such an astonishing deficiency in the crops; and it is not this country alone fuffers thereby, but every part of the known world where Wheat is cultivated; for a proof of which let any person inspect the foreign Wheats that are imported into this kingdom, fcarcely any of it will be found that is not more or less affected with this malady.

It appears from various Writers on the subject of Agriculture, that Smut in Wheat has formerly borne different appellations, as Smut Balls, Blacks, Coal, Brand, &c. which grow among good Corn; but since Agriculture, and a remedy for this evil, have engaged the atten-

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generally understood by the name of Smut; and in order to render this treatife clear to those who may be inexperienced in agricultural science, I shall endeavour to describe to them, what Smut is, and how it is to be discovered.

The stem and blade of Corn that produces Smut, appear like those which yield good Wheat, both grow up together; but the Smut may be known as foon as the ear burfts, and makes the least appearance, which is some days growing before it comes fairly out of the stem, and appears fomewhat different from good Wheat in point of colour, being at first of a darker green, after which the Balls change to a brown colour. If one of these Balls be bruised between your fingers, it produces a naufcous fmell, very fimilar to that of a rotten egg. The ears of Smut very frequently come out of the stem more crooked than the good Wheat, and was never known to bloffom like it; but, on opening the ear, Balls of Smut are found with fomething refembling a yellow kind of bloffom, diffeferent from good Wheat. It fometimes happens that one part of an ear is fmutty and the other part clean, but this is rarely the cafe; in general,

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from the fame root, the ear is either all clean, or all Smut.

It appears, that formerly in foreign countries, this difease was termed blight, as Tull observes in his Essay on the Principles of Tillage and Vegetation, wherein he mentions of Germany and Italy, that their Corn was infected with blight, which no doubt was what we now term Smut; and it is evident to me, this must be the case, having very lately seen Wheat from those parts extremely fmutty. Tull further observes, that this difease happens frequently in cold northern countries, in which I agree with him; but must further remark, that it is not confined to climate, being prevalent in all countries; neither will the finest seasons or climate be a fecurity against this evil, which I shall clearly prove to every unprejudiced mind.

Having, for the benefit of fuch who are not conversant with Agriculture, given the above hints, whereby they may experience themselves the truth of what I have afferted, I have to observe that in the year 1794, notwithstanding the certainty I had experienced, by repeated trials, of the efficacy of my method, I had declined all idea of publishing a Treatise of this

this kind, well knowing that how excellent foever, it would not escape censure from some who ridicule all publications, whether for the benefit of the community or not; but being pressed on all sides to make my Discovery public, and confident of its efficacy, convinced also of its great national utility, I resolved at length, for the good of the Public in general, to offer it by Subscription, and every person must acknowlege of what great service it must be to this Nation to be freed from fuch a complaint as that of Smut in Wheat, which is computed to cause a loss of nearly One Million per annum. And this will be prevented, if my method is generally put in practice; besides another advantage will be derived from it, as the grain will be much better in quality.

I shall, in the first place, shew what is the cause of Smut. Secondly, I shall lay down an infallible rule whereby any man may work so as totally to eradicate the Smut, and the necessity of preparing all kinds of Wheat before sown; and, lastly, point out the processes and methods that have been generally adopted, and wherein they have failed.

1st. Smut in Wheat proceeds from nothing more or less than from an ill quality of the grain,

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fuch as is commonly called light Wheat; which I can clearly prove from experiments. It is well known by all practical Farmers, that new Wheat is more subject to Smut than old; and they, in general, prefer fowing old Wheat. If you alk them the reason why old Wheat is preferable to new, they cannot inform you. When new Wheat is threshed out for sowing, it is done immediately, the first the Farmer can get into his barn (green), and most of it, whether of good or bad quality, will grow; but with old Wheat that is not the case, because, tho' of a thin, light, and inferior quality, by keeping one year, but a very fmall quantity of the light and bad corn will vegetate, in proportion to what it would was it fown the first year. the method that I shall now make public, heightens and affifts the vegetation, both of old and new Wheat, and prevents the Smut in both, either by extracting the evil quality, or dividing It has been an observation made the incurable. by many Farmers, that whenever a wet, cold feason happens it makes a considerable difference in the quality of the Wheat, and they then fay, we are doubtful our Wheat will prove Smutty next year. I have asked them why they were induced to think fo; their reply was, that it is generally fo; but could affign no reason, except that it was the cafe in their predeceffors' time.

time, and fo it is still, and they suppose it will always continue to be fo; --- that they had recourse to the same methods as had been adopted by those who had been in the practice of doing fo before their time, and they could not suppose any thing better could be administered. This has been the reasoning of many; but others, less bigoted, have wished to encourage any improvement that might be introduced. It is frequently remarked, that Wheat becomes Smutty in one part of a field, when in other parts of the fame field it is perfectly clean; and I have been asked the reason many times why this is the case; which is a question I could always readily reply to, as I am certain there can be but very few if any fields wherein the foil is exactly the fame in every part thereof; and the difference of foil, in different parts of the field, in a great measure, accounts for the difference of the produce. have frequently observed, that where the land is healthy and warm, the Smut has not so much abounded; and also where the Smut has made its appearance in a large field, that it has extended about ten to fifteen yards, some times more, fome times lefs, and perhaps it has continued in fome fields to three or four hundred yards, fome times in a strait direction, some times in an oblique form. In fact, it takes its course as the foil

foil changes, in the same manner as a vein of coal, or a vein of ore, in any mine, takes its direction in the bowels of the earth: and, indeed, both in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, where there is a deficiency of radical properties, or a corrupt conflitution, whatever is generated therefrom, must participate of the nature and effects of its origin. On this ground it is reasonable to conclude that infected Wheat, or grain of an imperfect quality, especially when sown on land that cannot improve it, should not be equal, or produce a crop equal to good, sound, full seed, sown on land congenial to its perfection, except some means are used to assist nature.

If a person will minutely examine the grains which will float on the surface of my preparation, tho' they may some of them appear, at first view, equally promising and sine as those which remain at the bottom, yet they will be found entirely defective on one side, as much so as the human frame under a paralytic affection. Change of seed is sometimes of peculiar service, but this alone will by no means ensure to the sower a clean crop, without a previous preparation, which I shall now subjoin, and that an infallible one. — My method, which I have already expressed in my hand-bills as very simple, and easy

eafy to be comprehended, is as follows: of which I trust my Readers will take particular notice, and attend closely to the rules contained therein, which are so sure and certain in their effects that it never has yet failed in one instance, in the twelve years since the first discovery; nor ever will, if properly adhered to, until the end of time.

Take a broad-bottom tub or cooler, fuch as is generally used in cooling beer or wort, or any other proper vehicle, about 12 inches deep would fuit best, (but more or less might anfwer the purpose) in which place a sufficient quantity of Wheat to take up a space in depth of about four inches, if a little more it is not very material; but I would not by any means advise to exceed this depth, as there is not fo much certainty in a greater depth, which I have proved. After the Wheat is thus regularly laid in the tub or cooler, pour on it a quantity of water, till it rifes about one inch and a half above the Wheat: I would not by any means advise more or less: then add two pounds of common falt and one ounce of nitre to every four bushels of good Wheat, Winchester measure. If the Wheat is of a good, found, flout quality, less falt might diffice; but if of a thin, inferior quality, it will require

require more than the above-mentioned quantity of falt, which must be regulated according to the quality of the Wheat. Let the whole be mixed and stirred up well together with a shovel, or any convenient instrument for the purpose. Then fkim off the light Wheat, which will fwim on the furface of the water, and not fuffer a fingle grain to remain that rifes to the furface. After which draw off the mixture from the Wheat, or take out the Wheat, and put to it the same quantity of Wheat again in the fame mixture, adding a fufficient quantity of water, together with a proportionate quantity of the other ingredients, to cover it to the same height as before directed; and fo continue to do till the whole quantity you may want to prepare has undergone this operation; and in case you want to fow it immediately, take a quantity of dry flacked lime, or dry wood-ashes, either will answer the purpose, and put over the prepared Wheat a fufficient quantity to make it dry; mix them well together, the Wheat will then be in a fit flate for immediate fowing; but in case flacked lime or wood-ashes cannot be immediately procured, take a few stones of unflacked lime and cover them with water, in the old accustomed way; and after they are properly diffolved and mixed, pour it upon the Wheat; and after mixing it well with the Wheat, it will be fit for fowing the next day, if required; but I always prefer dry lime or wood-ashes where they can be procured, and preparing and fowing the Wheat immediately, agreeably to my first directions, by all means if there is a possibility, tho' the latter method will not fail of having the defired effect. Indeed where there is a difficulty of procuring the articles, the purpose may be answered by omitting the falt, or otherwise the nitre; but in this case I would recommend the Wheat to be only from one to three inches deep: but where both these articles can be procured, it will certainly be much fafer. Having now laid before the Reader the whole plan by which I always worked during the course of twelve years (which never deceived me, nor will it deceive any perfon who practices from these rules) I shall trouble him with a few observations on some of the methods used by others, and at the same time convince him of the utility of my own process.

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In some parts of Somersetshire, the general method of preparing their seed is this; the day before they intend sowing they take a sew stones of unslacked lime and put them into a bucket of water to dissolve, then spread their Wheat on a sloor and pour the lime-water upon it, mixing it up together, yet in a very wet state; they then let it remain till sufficiently dry for sowing. This

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method

method they confider to be of some service, which it certainly is, tho' it comes far short of the defired effect; the produce being some times notwithstanding this preparation, very Smutty, fometimes not so much effected with it, which proves the fallibility of this mode, tho' it must be acknowledged the power of lime is very confiderable, being of a faline quality, and after the Wheat has been immerged and properly wetted, it adheres fast to the seed, and is confequently fown into the earth with it. By the methods I have laid down for my preparation, the worst of the light and affected feeds being separated from the other, the lime, affisted with the other ingredients, will have its full effect; for the falt and nitre penetrates the cleft, or chase, or chest of the seed, as it is variously termed in different parts of the kingdom, and being of a warm, nourifhing, preferving, healing, and vegetating quality, the immediate application of dry lime, or wood-ashes, secures, and in some fort incrusts it, not only till fown in the earth, but during the process of nature, prior to the chisiming, and materially strengthens the root through either a very wet or very cold Winter, fo that, when Spring is fomewhat advanced, you will fee fields the feed of which hath been thus prepared, if the land is any way proportionate in goodness, in the living tho' darker green of young flourishing Barley; whilst your neighbour's will appear brown, weak, and withering, shewing strong symptoms of premature old age. For this effect will be produced, in its degree, on Wheat that is not of a strong body, by causing it to strike a stronger root than it otherwise would do, facilitating its progress in the ground, and its vegetating much sooner than even good Wheat might do without this preparation.

A certain late Author, in his treatife on the fubject of Smut, would perfuade people that the Smut is infectious, like the small-pox; but he may as well perfuade them that Barley will infect Wheat and turn it into Barley, or Barley to Wheat; for it is well known that Smut balls, as viewed with the naked eye, appear only to contain a black or dark brown powder, tho', with a proper glass, you may discover the animalculæ, or living infects, with which it abounds. They are of a dark red, and frequently you may observe the greater part of them have a kind of white ring round their necks; nearly as foon as the ball is broken, being out of their natural element, they die: in fact, there is no substance whatever in Smut balls that can do either good or harm, with respect to infection; there being no infec-

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tious quality in them. He begins by faying, as the Smut balls come to maturity before the Wheat, they burft, and, mixing with the rain, impregnate the water, which enters the hufks that incloses grains of Wheat, the wind blowing one ear against another, that wherever it touches it infects each other. He further informs you, that if you put clean Wheat into any fack where Smutty Wheat has been, and has left a dust behind (which it certainly will do) that every grain of Wheat which touches the least particle of it is apt to produce Smut balls, the next feafon. He then compares the growth of Wheat to gilliflowers, cabbages, &c.; but after all he informs you, that after the Wheat is infected, he can do away that infection by washing; --- if he can, I am fure it is more than he can do with the fmall-pox after any one has taken the infection; which affertion, I believe, cannot be contradicted.

It is common in Glocestershire and Wiltshire, for the Farmers to lime and brine their Wheat, to do which, they take a quantity of falt, sufficient to make a pickle so strong as to bear up an egg; they then immerge the Wheat in this pickle, and after taking it out let it remain a day or two in a heap. Others will make a strong brine.

brine, in a hogshead, and put their Wheat into it, letting it remain twelve, and fome times eighteen hours in the pickle; afterwards they lime it, and as foon as they think it fufficiently dry, they fow it. This method is certainly, in a measure, a preventative; altho' it cannot be relied on, but more fo on fome lands than on others; and another disadvantage attending it is, that the Wheat lying fo long in a strong pickle, checks the vegetation not only of inferior feed, but of that which is good and found: and the remedy, on that account, often proves worse than the difease. Then they are apt to complain that their Seed Wheat was bad; or that the weather was bad, and had killed that feed; when, at the fame time, the method they have used to preserve it has been the means of destroying it. Various methods are practifed in different parts of the country. In Effex and Suffolk, some Farmers make use of oil of vitriol, aqua fortis, mercury, and falt together; and immerge their Wheat in this composition for about ten hours, some more, fome less, according to their own conception of the effects.

A Farmer, in Effex, informed me, that he makes his steep with soper's lye, and has found benefit from it; but acknowledges that no dependance

pendance is to be placed upon it. Every rational man will allow, after he is informed from whence Smut proceeds, that all steeps that have been heretofore recommended, have proved to be more injurious than beneficial, by destroying the vegetation of good feed. Many Gentlemen, who understand only the theory of husbandry, will tell you that it is none but flovenly Farmers are fufferers by Smut, but this I deny in toto: for let a Farmer be as cleanly and as cautious as he can be, as I have before observed, by the old ac-Eustomed method, he cannot prevent the Smut; but let him be ever so slovenly, if he takes care to prepare his Wheat by the methods I have laid down, and pay a particular attention to the rules therein contained, he never can miss of infuring a clean crop; and he may also, by adopting my method, continue to fow the produce of the same seed year after year, without any risk of Smut: but though a change of feed is not at all necessary, when my rules are closely attended to, for the prevention of Smut, to which the crop will never be liable, if feed is never changed, to the end of time; yet I should, for other reasons, strongly recommend a change, as it is a fact long fince afcertained, from repeated trials and invariable experience, that feed of most kinds, rose on a different soil, and confiderable

fiderable distance from that where sown, will invariably produce not only more grain on a given furface, or per acre, but much more pure, than repeated crops from the fame feed: for the same seed sown year after year, of any description, will invariably degenerate and become what in many countries is termed rapey. Neither would I wish to be understood by any means to encourage flovenliness in husbandry; but, as all Wheat is subject to Smut, all ought to be prepared every year, as well by a decent Farmer, as a flovenly and careless one; and what Farmer can produce any one fack of Wheat without light affected corns? and unless he can eradicate the principle of Smut, those light corns will be liable to produce it.

I have often heard very good Farmers offer to bet confiderable wagers that there never was a crop of Wheat grown but was more or less affected. I know it is frequently the case, that whilst Wheat has been growing no Smut has been discovered; but when that same Wheat has been thrashed out and winnowed, on examination, a considerable quantity of Smut has been found at the tail of the heap, which clearly proves, that notwithstanding in some instances the Smut may not be discovered before the harvest,

harvest, nor even in the gathering in of the erop, yet it must be allowed, that the Farmers have been deceived by their method of preparation, which, even in this case, ultimately proves the fallibility thereof; and which, from my mode of preparation, never has been found either before harvest or after. There are some who take a quantity of falt, and make a strong pickle, in which they immerge the Wheat, perhaps to the depth of two or three feet; they may skim and stir it as long as they please, but it is impossible they can rely on that method with certainty, because the quantity of Wheat presses and keeps down the bottom part, and entirely prevents its working, befides materially injuring the good feed, by the great length of time it remains in this strong steep or pickle. Wheat, as before observed, should never be more than four inches deep in the tub, or cooler, whilst under the regular process, as described in my method.

The methods generally made use of in Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire, is to take the quantity of Wheat they mean to prepare, and lay it on a sloor, and take a few stones of unslacked lime, which they put into a bucket, or some such thing, with water; and when the lime is dissolved, they put about three pounds of falt to every two bushels of Wheat, in its dry flate; then they pour the lime water upon it, mixing it up very thin: this method they conceive to be of fervice, yet this method they acknowledge is not to be relied on. In Cheshire, a Farmer informed me his general practice was to prepare his Wheat by nearly filling up a common fize hogshead with Wheat, and adding a fufficient quantity of water to rife above the Wheat, and then mixing therewith one pound of arfenic, one pound of flour of fulphur, and let it remain for fixteen or eighteen hours, then draw off the water, lime the Wheat, and fow it. This was his general practice, for want of being acquainted with the cause of Smut, and consequently of the remedy: he might as well have put two pounds of earth, as the fulphur and arfenic, and it would have had as good an effect.

I was induced from the great loss sustained through Smut, to endeavour at discovering, if possible, from whence Smut proceeded; and as liming and brining had been the practice with the Farmers for many years without effect, I concluded it certainly must proceed from an ill quality in the seed.

Happening one day to stand by a barn-door, which leads into an orchard, where the chaff at the

the times of winnowing is blown; and as the produce from fome light corn blown there the preceding Autuun, was then making its appearance, to my great furprize found every ear finutty-This led me to conclude, that the Smut must proceed from some defect in the quality of the feed. I then reflected on the necessity of separating the seed of an inferior quality from the good feed. I tried many methods, but found them all ineffectual: among others, I tried the usual mode, and put a quantity of Wheat into a strong pickle, and skimmed and turned it as long as I could perceive a fingle grain on the furface, and found it also took off most of the feeds of weeds. I then took the Wheat out of the pickle, and, on examination, found there were many affected grains still in it: I then knew it impossible to do it by this method, whilft the Wheat was fo deep in bulk: I then tried it again, at the depth of four inches, and this answered my purpose in some good degree, for on adding fome nitre, this last preparation produced as clean a crop as ever was feen. The year following I bought a quantity of the fmuttiest Wheat I could procure; it was the worst I ever faw, and being of fo very. bad quality, I laid it only about the depth of two inches, adding a little more ingredients than I had done to the former parcel, well skimmed

it, and fowed it, and it produced as clean a crop as ever was grown; whilst in the same field there was clean Wheat sown, bought thirty miles off, for a change of seed, which was prepared in their usual method, and turned out some part smutty. I continued trying experiments with my preparation many years, and never sound it sail, nor ever will it sail, if properly attended to and applied, as directed in the former part of this Treatise.

Where the Barton dung is not turned over, or made into a dung-hill, which is frequently the case, that it is never moved from the ground where it was first thrown by the thresher until it is taken up to be halled into the field as manure for a crop of Wheat, it is well known to every Farmer, that the bad, weak, and affected Wheat, will not thresh out as easily as good-bodied will do; and, of course, will often times be thrown out in the straw, and, consequently, by being in the dung, is put on the land, and ploughed in as foon as possible; and the crops of Wheat are fown, without confidering that affected, light feed, which is fo frequently mixed with the dung, will grow up with the Wheat, and very often occasions a great deal of Smut, which no mode of preparation can possibly prevent. They think the

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the dung is the whole cause; but they will not find this to be case when they plough their land and dung it for turnips, which are fown, and afterwards the land is planted with Wheat; because, though the light feeds grow up with the turnips, yet they are destroyed in the hoeing, or grazed down by the cattle. To prevent the evil of this light affected corn growing in the dung, let the Farmer put all his dung into a dunghill, and turn it, and let it be properly rotted before he puts it on the land, and it will not only make the dung of more value, but will totally destroy all the grains of corn that may be in it, and a variety of weeds, and have its proper effect on the land that it is intended to manure.

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POSTSCRIPT.

I hope every thing necessary for the prevention of Smut is communicated by this Treatise, in so plain and intelligible a manner that none can misunderstand it; and trust that every Subscriber will be careful not to omit any of the rules here set down; then I am sure they may for ever bid desiance to the least appearance of Smut in Wheat.

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I hope every timing necessary for the prevention of Smut is communicated by this Treatile, in so plant and intelligible a nominer that none can milunderstandie; more than that every Smitcher will be carefull and to omit any of the sales here set down, then I am sure they may sales here set down, then I am sure they may far ever hid dehance to the least appearance of the smut in What.

A REWARD OF THIRTY GUINEAS

Is hereby offered to any Person, of any description, who shall inform, to Conviction, against any Person whoever who prepares Wheat for sowing according to my prescribed method, or similar thereto, except a Subscriber; or against any Subscriber who prepares Wheat by the method prescribed in this Pamphlet, or similar thereto, for any other Person whoever who is not a Subscriber.

A REWARD OF THIRTY GUINEAS

Is hereby affered to any Perfon, of any description, who theil inform, to Conviction, against any Perfon whoever who prepares Wheat for fowing according to my preferibed method, or finish thereto, except a Sub-feriber; or against any Subjection who prepares Wheat by the method preferibed in this Pamphlet, or fimilar thereto, for any other Perfon whoever who is not a cluster.